

Remarks Following a Meeting With the House Republican Conference *October 30, 2007*

Thank you all. I just had a very constructive and important meeting with the leadership and the Republican Members of the United States House of Representatives. And I want to thank you all for coming down, and thank you for your leadership.

Congress is not getting its work done. We're near the end of the year, and there really isn't much to show for it. The House of Representatives has wasted valuable time on a constant stream of investigations, and the Senate has wasted valuable time on an endless series of failed votes to pull our troops out of Iraq. And yet there's important work to be done on behalf of the American people.

They have not been able to send a single annual appropriations bill to my desk, and that's the worst record for a Congress in 20 years. One of the important responsibilities of the Congress is to pass appropriations bills, and yet the leadership that's on the Hill now cannot get that job done.

They've also passed an endless series of tax increases. You know, they proposed tax increases in the farm bill, the energy bill, the small-business bill, and of course, the SCHIP bill. They haven't seen a bill they could not solve without shoving a tax hike into it. In other words, they believe in raising taxes, and we don't.

Spending is skyrocketing under their leadership; at least, proposed spending is skyrocketing under their leadership. After all, they're trying to spend an additional \$205 billion over the next 5 years. Some have said, "Well, that doesn't matter much; it's not that much money." Well, 205 billion over the next 5 years in the real world amounts to this: 4.7 million per hour, every hour for every day for the next 5 years. That's a lot of money.

And that doesn't even include spending that would actually pay for 2 million people to move from private health insurance to

an inefficient, lower quality, Government-run program. Despite knowing it does not have a chance of becoming law, the Senate will now take up the second SCHIP bill the House passed last week. I believe the Senate is wasting valuable time. This bill, remarkably, manages to spend more money over 5 years than the first bill did.

After going alone and going nowhere, Congress should instead work with the administration on a bill that puts poor children first, a bill that will take care of the poor children that the initial bill said we got to do, a bill that would stop diverting money to adults. You realize some major States in the United States spend more money on adults than they do on children? We want a bill that enrolls the more than 500,000 poor children currently eligible for the program who are not a part of the program.

We want to sit down in good faith and come up with a bill that is responsible, because Congress has been unable or unwilling to get its basic job done of passing spending bills.

There are now reports that congressional leaders may be considering combining the Veterans and Department of Defense appropriations bills and then add a bloated labor, health, and education spending bill to both of them. It's hard to imagine a more cynical political strategy than trying to hold hostage funding for our troops in combat and our wounded warriors in order to extract \$11 billion in additional social spending. I hope media reports about such a strategy are wrong; I really do. If they're not, if the reports of this strategy are true, I will veto such a three-bill pileup. Congress should pass each bill, one at a time, in a fiscally responsible manner that reflects agreement between the legislative branch and the executive branch.

I again ask Congress to send me a clean veterans funding bill that we have already agreed to by Veterans Day, so we can keep America's promise to those who have defended our freedom and are recovering from injury. I again urge them to pass a clean defense appropriations bill and a war supplemental bill to fund our troops in combat.

I know some on the Democrat side didn't agree with my decision to send troops in, but it seems like we ought to be able to agree that we're going to support our troops who are in harm's way. I know the Members feel that way, standing with me. I hope the leadership feels that way, and they ought to give me a bill that funds,

among other things, bullets and body armor and protection against IEDs and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles. It would be irresponsible to not give our troops the resources they need to get their job done because Congress was unable to get its job done.

Again, I want to thank the Members here. I appreciate us working together for the good of the United States of America. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:27 a.m. on the North Portico at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 976 and H.R. 3963.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda

October 30, 2007

President Bush. Mr. President, thank you for coming. Second time we have met here in the Oval Office, and I told the President that I remember distinctly his description of what life was like in Uganda, particularly when it comes to his raising cows; he's a cattleman, and it gave us something to talk about.

But we talked about other issues as well. I am very proud that the United States taxpayer has supported this President in his efforts to deal with HIV/AIDS. And Uganda is the epitome of the—of how one can implement a comprehensive ABC strategy to achieve concrete and specific results for the sake of humanity. And so, Mr. President, I assure you we'll continue to support you on HIV/AIDS, and equally important, we'll support you on fighting malaria.

President Museveni. Thank you.

President Bush. And I thank you for your determined efforts.

We also talked about the benefit of trade between the United States and the con-

tinent of Africa, and the President reminded me how important AGOA is to promote better lives in our respective countries. And so, Mr. President, thank you for that vision.

We talked about a lot of other subjects. We talked about the security in the region. The President has got good advice, and he's got good judgment when it comes to issues like Somalia and the Sudan. I assured him that we're committed to peace and stability. A matter of fact, I informed the President today that I spoke to the Secretary-General of the United Nations about Sudan, how I think it is important to continue putting the pressure on respective parties to come up with an agreement that will help end the genocide, and that it's important for the United Nations to get moving those troops into this Darfur region as quickly as possible.

And of course, we discussed about the peace between—the agreement between south and north of Sudan, and our desire